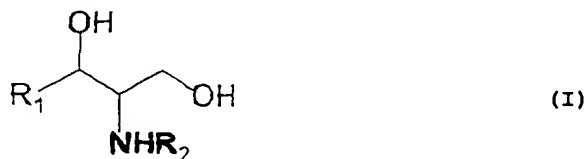


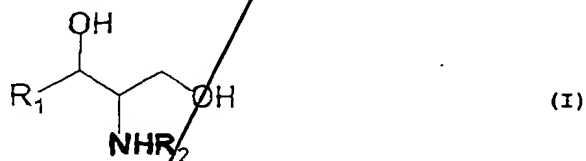
A1  
cont  
wherein  $R_1$  represents a hydrocarbon group having 9 to 17 carbon atoms; and  $R_2$  represents an acyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms which can contain a hydroxyl group,  
(B) a long-chain fatty acid having 12 to 24 carbon atoms, (C) a nonionic surface active agent, and (D) water.

A 2  
7. A method of preparing a clear aqueous composition consisting essentially of 1.0 to 5.0% by weight of a ceramide represented by formula (I):



Sub  
B1  
( wherein  $R_1$  represents a hydrocarbon group having 9 to 17 carbon atoms; and  $R_2$  represents an acyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms which can contain a hydroxyl group, comprising adding water to a lipid composition consisting essentially of (A) said ceramide, (B) a long-chain fatty acid having 12 to 24 carbon atoms, and (C) a nonionic surface active agent, whereby said lipid composition upon combination with water will yield a clear aqueous ceramide composition.

A3 11. (Amended) A lipid composition for preparing a clear aqueous ceramide composition, the lipid composition consisting essentially of (A) a ceramide represented by formula (I):



wherein R<sub>1</sub> represents a hydrocarbon group having 9 to 17 carbon atoms; and R<sub>2</sub> represents an acyl group having 2 to 30 carbon atoms which can contain a hydroxyl group, (B) a long-chain fatty acid having 12 to 24 carbon atoms, and (C) a nonionic surface active agent, wherein the weight ratio of component (A) to component (B) is from 20:1 to 1:3, and the weight ratio of component (A) to component (C) is from 1:1 to 1:10.